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Haverfordwest Rural District Council

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

FOR THE YEAR 1938.

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To the Chairman and Members of the Haverfordwest Rural District Council.

Gentlemen,—I beg to submit my Report for the year 1938.

STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

Area (in Acres)	173,772
Population	19,400

Rateable value and sum represented by a 1d. rate, £143.

	Total.	M.	F.
Births			
Legitimate	318	150	168
Illegitimate	19	9	10
Birth Rate per 1,000 of the estimated population, 17.4			
Still-births.			
Legitimate	13	6	7
Illegitimate	2	1	1
Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births, 18.1.			
Deaths.	297	166	131
Rate per 1,000 total of the estimated resident population, 15.3.			

DEATHS.

Deaths from Puerperal Causes.

Puerperal Sepsis	0
Other Puerperal Causes	1
Of Infants under 1 year:—	
Legitimate	10
Illegitimate	1

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES OF THE AREA.

Public Health Officers of the Authority.

There is one part-time Medical Officer who also carries out the duties of Public Vaccinator and Public Assistance Medical Officer of Fishguard and District.

Sanitary Inspectors.—Mr. Owen Evans, a qualified Sanitary and Building Inspector, was appointed in April. It was found necessary to make this appointment to deal with the additional amount of work requiring supervision especially at the Admiralty Works at Trecwn. Mr. Phillips was given Trecwn and district; Mr. Evans the north, and Mr. Nicholson remained in charge of the south.

One Vaccination Officer who also holds the appointment of Registrar of Births and Deaths.

There are 15 Nurses employed in the district under the District Nursing Association. They also carry out health visiting for the County Council, all are qualified Midwives (C.M.B.) and are partly trained in general nursing. In many instances the Nurse has no direct telephone communication and local Associations should consider this a matter of necessity.

Hospitals.

The alterations and extensions at the County Memorial Hospital bring the number of beds to over 100. The extensions include a new Ward—while new accommodation has been found for the nursing staff and the House Surgeon.

The Sealyham Hospital at St. Dogwells, under King Edward Welsh Memorial Association, having accommodation for thirty patients suffering from Pulmonary Tuberculosis.

St. Bride's Hospital also under the same controlling authority, has accommodation for 130 children suffering from surgical tuberculosis—age limit 14 years.

Fever.

The Hospital for infectious diseases is at Pembroke Dock average number of beds number 26.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE AREA.

Water Supplies.

The Regional Water Scheme from Little Newcastle to Solva was completed during the year. 18 miles of water mains were laid down to supply 7 parishes. The scheme includes a large storage reservoir at the Head Works and a service reservoir at Solva. The cost of the scheme was £35,000.

Several extensions from this scheme are contemplated to supply neighbouring villages.

The Council has approved of a water scheme for the parishes of Freystrop, Llangwm, Llanstadwell, Walton West at a cost of £21,000 it is expected that this work will be completed in the coming year. Samples of water taken from wells used for drinking purposes in the district of Solva and St. Davids were considered on the whole satisfactory. In certain circumstances some reports showed evidence of surface pollution. The well was closed. A Clorinating Plant was installed at the Pumping Station at St. Davids Water Company, although the supply is considered satisfactory for drinking and domestic purposes. This supply is inadequate to meet with the increase of the population in the summer and no time should be lost in joining up St. Davids with the Regional Scheme.

Drainage and Sewerage.

Drainage Schemes are urgently needed for the villages of Letterston, Solva, St. Davids, and Little Haven. The disposal of house refuse has been a problem in many villages, especially in places where there have been a great increase of the population. There should be more frequent collections, and far better arrangements for disposal. In spite of the rigid supervision of the Inspectors much more can be done by the inhabitants to avoid this obvious source of nuisance.

Public Conveniences.

The Council has under consideration the erection of conveniences at Broad Haven, Newgale, Solva, and St. Davids. This is another matter of urgency.

Schools.

There are 62 schools in the district—24 Council and 38 Non-Provided. The introduction of the water mains into those schools more favourably situated has given much satisfaction. Many schools however have primitive methods of sanitation and much improvement is desirable, when it is considered that a greater part of the day is spent by the children in the vicinity and where many of them partake of meals.

Slaughter Houses.

Number registered—20.

During the year 448 carcases were examined by the Inspectors and 205 lbs. of meat was surrendered voluntarily being unfit for consumption.

Milk Supplies.

No. of sellers of milk—Retail	68
Wholesale	770
No. providing Accredited Milk	75
No. providing Tuberculin Milk	138
No. of New Cowsheds approved	5

Taking into consideration the great increase in the numbers of those who produce wholesale milk, the work of supervision carried out by the Inspectors has been commendable.

Of the samples of milk taken from different sources and sent for Clinical examination few were found to be outside the standard.

SANITARY INSPECTIONS OF THE AREA.

Number and Nature of Inspections carried out by the Sanitary Inspectors:—

Inspections	984
Notices served—Informal	130
Notices served—Statutory	30
Drains and Offensive Middens	24
Provision of Sanitary Conveniences	18
Pigstyes, Cowsheds, Dairies and Slaughter Houses	40
Offensive Accumulation of Manure and Refuse...	34
Pollution and Improvement of Water Supplies...	15
Repair and Cleanliness of Houses	30
House Drains connected to Cesspits	20
Privies converted into W.C.	14
Slop Water nuisances	36

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

Meat and other Foods.

No action was taken under the various Acts and other Regulations controlling the various foods.

HOUSING.

The number of new houses erected by private enterprise in the district during the year was 56

1.—Inspection of Dwelling-Houses during the year:—

(1) (a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health of Housing Acts 960
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose... 984
(2) (a) Number of dwelling houses (included and recorded (1 above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925... 513
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose... 557
(3) Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation 120
(4) Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation 64

2.—Remedy of Defects during the year without Service of formal Notices:—

Number of defective dwelling houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers 47

3.—Action under Statutory Powers during year:—

(a) Proceedings under Sections 17, 18, and 23 of the Housing Act, 1930—
(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs 30
(2) Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit After service of formal notices:—
(a) By Owners 24
(b) By Local Authority in default of Owners..... 0
(b) Proceedings under the Public Health Acts:—
(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied 43
(2) Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices:—
(a) By Owners 27
(b) By Local Authority in default of Owners..... 0
(c) Proceedings under Sections 19 and 31 of the Housing Act, 1930:—
(1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made 6
(2) Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders 3
(d) Proceedings under Section 20 of the Housing Act, 1930:—
(1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made 0
(2) Number of separate tenements or underground

rooms in respect of which Closing Orders determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit	0

Housing Act, 1936—Overcrowding and Slum Clearance.

(a)	1—No. of dwellings overcrowded	68
	2—No. of families dwelling there	71
	3—No. of persons concerned	355
(b)	1—No. of new cases of overcrowding in the year...	12
(c)	1—No. of cases of overcrowding	25
	2—No. of persons concerned	119

BACTERIOLOGICAL LABORATORIES.

A Laboratory is attached to the Public Health Department at Haverfordwest where the examination of Swabs from suspected diphtheria cases is carried out. Arrangements are made for the examination of other special specimens at the Beck Laboratory attached to the Swansea General Hospital. A Clinic Laboratory will shortly be established at the County Hospital.

VACCINATION.

The number vaccinated during the year were:—

Primary	63
Secondary	8

FACTORIES, WORKSHOPS, AND WORK-PLACES.

Registered.

	North Area.	South Area.
Flour Mills	4	1
Wool Mills	9	2
Printing	1	0
Tailoring	10	0
Joinery	10	6
Bakehouses	9	8
Bookmaking	2	2
Smithy	7	12
Brickworks	0	1
Mineral Water Works	0	1
Steam Laundry	0	1
Engineering Works	0	1
Herring Factory	0	1
Carpenters	6	14
Hay-pressing	0	1
Corn Mills	0	3

These were all inspected and found satisfactory. Notices served were for minor defects and shewn as follows:—

1.—Inspection of Factories, Workshops, and Work-places.

	Inspections.	Written Notices.	Number of Occupiers Prosecuted.
Factories (including Factory Laundries).	18	1	0
Workshops (including Workshop Laundries).	15	3	0
Workplaces (other than Outworkers' premises)	14	4	0
Total	47	8	0

Rag Flock Acts :—

There are no premises in thedistrict where Rag and Flock is manufactured or sold.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (other than Tuberculosis).

Disease.	Total Cases Notified	Cases admitted to Hospital.	Total Deaths.
Smallpox	0	0	0
Scarlet Fever	14	12	0
Diphtheria	20	6	3
Enteric Fever (including Paratyphoid)	56	52	12
Puerperal Fever	0	0	0
Puerperal Pyerxia	1	0	0
Pneumonia	2	0	0
Erysipelas	1	0	0

The Dicks and Schicks Tests.

Neither of these tests were made use of during the year.

TYPHOID EPIDEMIC.

The occurrence of typhoid in the district was first suspected by Dr. Elliot, of St. Davids, when he sent his patient, Mr. Lewis, to the Isolation Hospital on January 20th. On the 22nd together with the M.O.H. and Dr. Elliot I visited St. Davids and saw three other suspicious cases. We decided to arrange for immediate admission to Hospital. In the meanwhile information was forthcoming that there were suspicious cases at Solva which I also visited.

Observation at the Hospital confirmed our early suspicions and these were proved correct by blood tests. The M.O.H. communicated with all Doctors and the Ministry of Health, and Hospital arrangements were completed to admit considerable numbers. Solva cases were also found positive by blood tests.

Precautions with regard to water—the most common known source of infection—were now taken and investigations on other lines were commenced. Cases from other areas were now being notified and in the few days no fewer than fifteen cases were brought to my notice.

Dr. Howell, of the Welsh Board of Health, arrived to help in investigations, whilst other members of the Medical Staff also gave their assistance in various ways.

Dr. Howell concentrated her efforts in finding the probable cause.

All possible suspicious water supplies were analysed and samples were taken of milk, and although many were found to he unsatisfactory none could be blamed for the outbreak.

Further investigations began to point to food as the probable source and a vast amount of effort was spent by Dr. Howell and the Sanitary Inspectors and myself in following up all clues.

After lengthy and protracted investigations, indications began to point to the fact that the most probable cause of the outbreak was infected food, and everything indicated that the source of infection centered round one particular place of business.

Bacteriological investigations were then carried out and samples of the blood and excreta were taken from the owners and inhabitants of these business premises.

A positive weidel returned from one individual in this establishment indicated that she was a carrier or infective agent. The place of business was visited and the people concerned warned of the danger of continuing to sell certain foodstuffs, and all perishable goods were

ordered to be destroyed. The infected person was advised to undergo further investigation and treatment to which she agreed and she was removed to Cardiff Isolation Hospital under the supervision of Dr. Emrys Harries, who went very thoroughly into the case.

The conclusion established was that this patient had definitely suffered from a recent attack of typhoid. It was ascertained that she had been ill at her home with diarrhoea and inflamation of the bowel before Christmas but she stated that there was no doctor in attendance. The patient could give no suggestions as to the origin of her illness, but she had been away from home for a period previous to her being taken ill, it is assumed that she contracted typhoid while away.

The outbreak was definitely proved to be not due to one particular foodstuff but the great majority of the infected persons had taken some food or other from this business premises.

The Investigating Officers were satisfied from the evidence that the outbreak originated from food supplied from the Beehive, St. Davids, while the authorities are satisfied that the original patient acquired her infection outside the county. It is regretted that the widest investigations failed to disclose where the patient contracted the infection.

The total number of cases in the epidemic was fifty-five occurring in a period from January 20th to April 4th. Fifty-one were treated in Hospital and four in their homes. The outbreak was of a very grave type and in spite of the excellent medical and nursing arrangements twelve deaths occurred. Each patient before discharge, was submitted to a thorough bacteriological examination and with the exception of one patient who resides at St. Davids all are free from the infection. This patient must be considered a possible carrier and all precautions are being taken.

I would like to add that my Council greatly appreciate the efforts of the County Council to meet the emergency by providing such excellent accommodation and treatment at such short notice.

TUBERCULOSIS.

New Cases and Mortality.

Age Periods	New Cases				Deaths			
	Respiratory		Non-Respiratory		Respiratory		Non-Respiratory	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0								
1	1		1					
5	1	3		1	1			1
15	5	2	2	1	1	1	1	
25	4	2	1		2	2		
35	1	1	1		2	1		
45		1		1	2			
55	1	2			2			
65 and upwards .								
Totals ..	13	11	5	3	10	4	1	1

No action was taken under the Public Health (Prevention of Tuberculosis) Regulations, 1925, or under Section 62 of the Public Health Act, 1935. There were 27 cases notified and 9 deaths recorded.

The premises and clothing of patients removed to Hospitals or after death were attended to.

The after-care of cases discharged from hospitals, many in semi-convalescent state, is a problem which should be tackled with greater authority. It is regretted that the supervision and care which cases receive while in hospital can seldom be continued on their discharge. Where housing conditions are obviously detrimental to the continued progress of the case, some form of shelter might be erected for such cases.

CAUSES OF DEATH.

Typhoid	6
Diphtheria	4
Influenza	3
Tuberculosis—Respiratory	14
Tuberculosis—Other Forms	0
Cancer	38
Diabetes	3
Cerebral Haemorrhage	16
Heart Disease	60
Other Circulatory Diseases	15
Bronchitis	6
Pneumonia	11
Other Respiratory Diseases	4
Digestion Diseases	7
Nephritis	17
Puerperal Sepsis	0
Other Causes	1
Appendicitis	1
Senility	26
Suicide	2
Violence	17
Cerebro Spinal Fever	0
Whooping Cough	0
Premature Births	6

I remain,

Your obedient servant,

J. HOWARD OWEN, M.O.H., R.D.

"ECHO" OFFICE, FISHGUARD.